

# **Complaints and Samples**

## **2009 EHS Orientation**

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# Confusing Issues

- **What is a Container Code?**
- **Who is the Manufacturing Company?**
- **What is an Establishment Number?**
- **What is a UPC Number?**
- **What is a Carton Code?**

# Container Code Solution

- **Container code is the identification of a manufacturing plant (FDA requirement)**
- **It may include product code, year, day, time, and shift codes**
- **“Best by” or “expiration” date is part of the container code**

# Container Code Example (24040/11257)

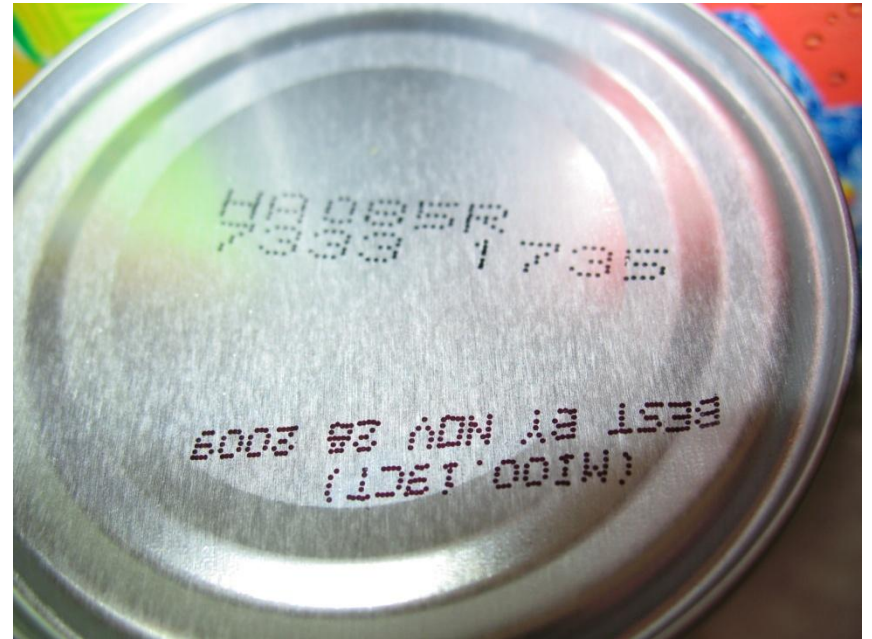
**Each company has their own coding system**

- **2** represents the manufacturing facility
- **4040** is the product code (asparagus cuts)
- **1** is the day shift code
- **125** is the 125<sup>th</sup> day of the year
- **7** is the year code

# Code Types

## Embossed Code

## Ink Jet Code



# Manufacturing Company

- **PCA Peanut Corporation**
  - Keebler Crackers
  - Trader's Joe Natural Peanut Butter
- **New Era Canning**
  - Gordon Food Service green beans
  - Sysco green beans
- **Seneca Foods** - Sysco green beans
- **Del Monte** - Del Monte green beans

# Establishment Number

- **Stamped inside the USDA mark of inspection**
- **Also found at other locations on package**
- **Dairy establishments use plant number (No.18 indicates IN dairies)**
- **Examples**
  - **Westland Meat Co. - “Est. # 336”**
  - **JTM Food Group - “Est. # 1917”**
  - **Eddy’s Ice Cream - Plant # 18-1644**

# **Universal Product Code (UPC)**

- **UPC is used by manufacturers to benefit distributors and warehouses**
- **UPC and location numbers are scanned, making it easy to identify where the product is stored in the warehouse**

# UPC - continued



# **Consumer Complaint Form**

- **New version - electronic form**
- **In case of illness, record onset time of symptoms and 72 hour food history**
- **Complete back page when a follow-up is completed or when collecting a sample from the consumer**

# How do we Investigate?

- **Start with fact findings**
- **Obtain the object and original package if possible**
- **Identify the label and manufacturing company info**
- **Include all codes (except UPC)**

# **Investigation - continued**

- **Where was the product purchased?**
- **Were there other similar complaints?**
- **Do samples need to be collected?**
- **If collected they need to be sent to Food Protection office**
- **Food Lab will analyze samples as part of the investigation**

# **Common Investigative Questions**

- **If package is open, should unopened control sample be collected?**
- **How to determine source of Indian Moth infestation**
  - **Check store shelves where product is displayed and other products in the same area**
  - **Check the warehouse storage area**

# Collecting Samples

- **Do we have enough sample to run a test?**
- **Is it a pre-packaged labeled product?**
- **What if it is an open item?**
- **Bugs or insects are found in canned products?**
- **Do we collect a blood contaminated sample?**

# Collecting Samples - continued

- **It's important to know the source of a sample**
- **If left over food is from a restaurant, do they have an adequate amount (8 oz) ?**
- **Were there other complaints?**
- **Public health significance?**

# Receiving Sample

- **Perishable samples must be packed in coolers with ice packs**
- **Non-perishable products can be packed in regular boxes**
- **Severely damaged containers or compromised samples will not be tested**

# **Receiving Sample - continued**

- **Include consumer complaint and sample collection report form**
- **Samples accepted from police must include police report**
- **Narrative report should be submitted along with food borne outbreak samples**

# Receiving Sample - continued

- **Samples with multiple products are identified as Sub 1, Sub 2, etc.**
- **For chain of custody:**
  - **signature on ISDH security seal**
  - **signature on “sample sealed with official seals marked”**
  - **signature of investigator who collected sample**
  - **all must be the same**

# **Sample Results**

- **A copy of results will be sent to manufacturing company**
- **FDA's local office would get copy**
  - **If it involves an out-of-state manufacturing facility**
  - **When follow-up is required**

## **Sample Results - continued**

- **Customer would also get copy of the results**
- **In some cases, LHD would notify consumer**
- **LHD will also get copy with additional instructions if follow-up action is needed**

# **When In Question**

- **If you have any questions during investigative process, please do not hesitate to call the office**
- **Use new complaint form to ensure collecting adequate data**

# Types of Complaints

- **Foreign object in food**
- **Illness or Injury**
- **Food handler**
- **Sanitation issue**

# **Foreign Object**

- **Here are a few interesting samples that have been received and tested in Food Lab**

Lab#0607-0615 Sample#32-511 Time:3:00p

Date:03-09-07

Description: Picture 3 showing the foreign object  
out of container and being measured.



1 2 3 4 5 6  
**CENTIMETERS**

**Cat. No. 09-016**

**INCHES**

1

2





Lab #: 0708-0451a

Sample #: 82-514

Date: 12-05-07

Time: 14:00 hrs.

Description: Opened jar  
of cashews analyzed  
for foreign material.



Lab #: 0708-0451c

Sample #: 82-514

Date: 12-05-07

Time: 14:00 hrs.

Description: Closer view of  
foreign material under dissection scope.



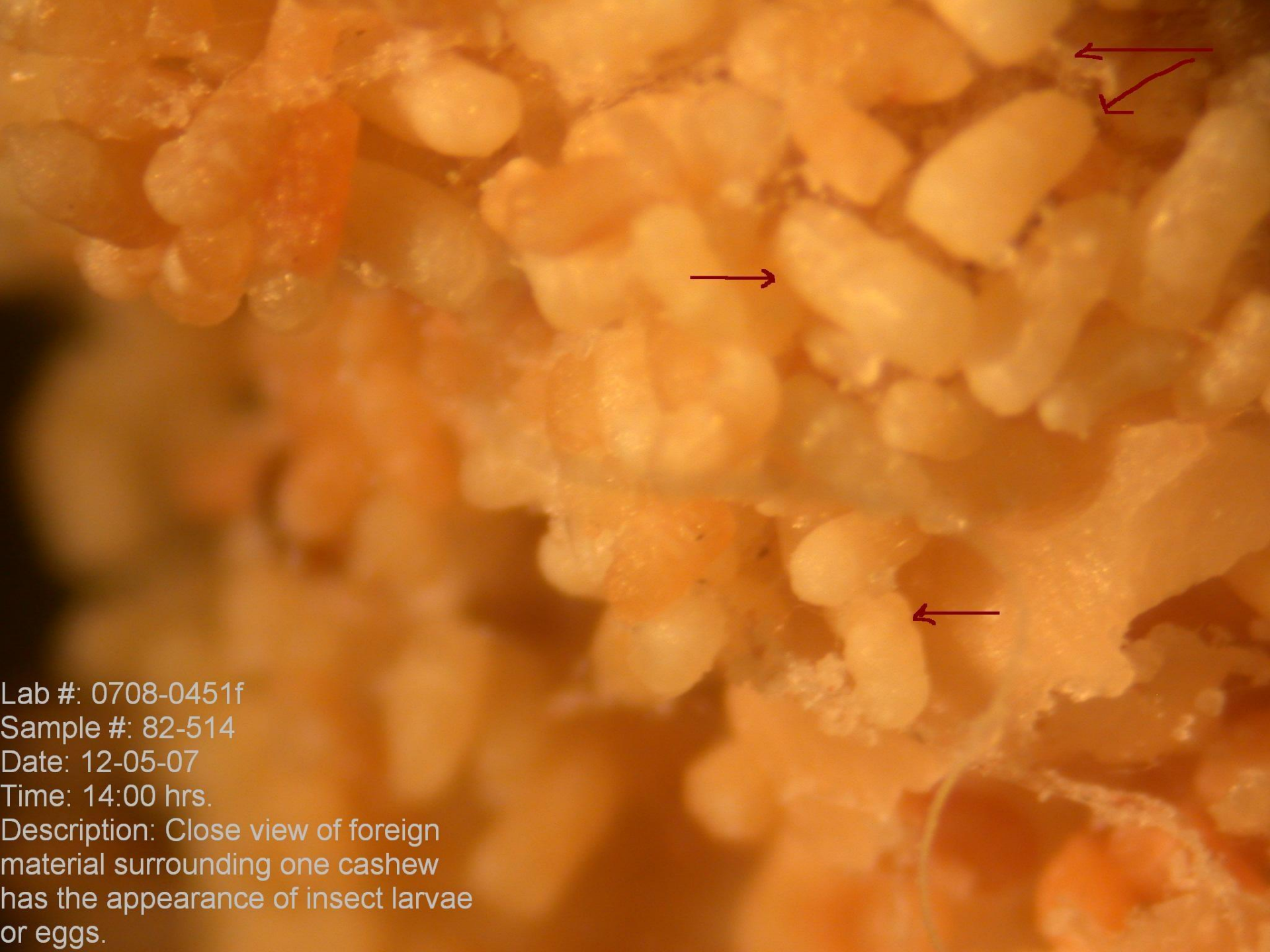
Lab #: 0708-0451h

Sample #: 82-514

Date: 12-05-07

Time: 14:00 hrs.

Description: 10x magnification  
shows a closer view of insect  
larvae found in sample.



Lab #: 0708-0451f

Sample #: 82-514

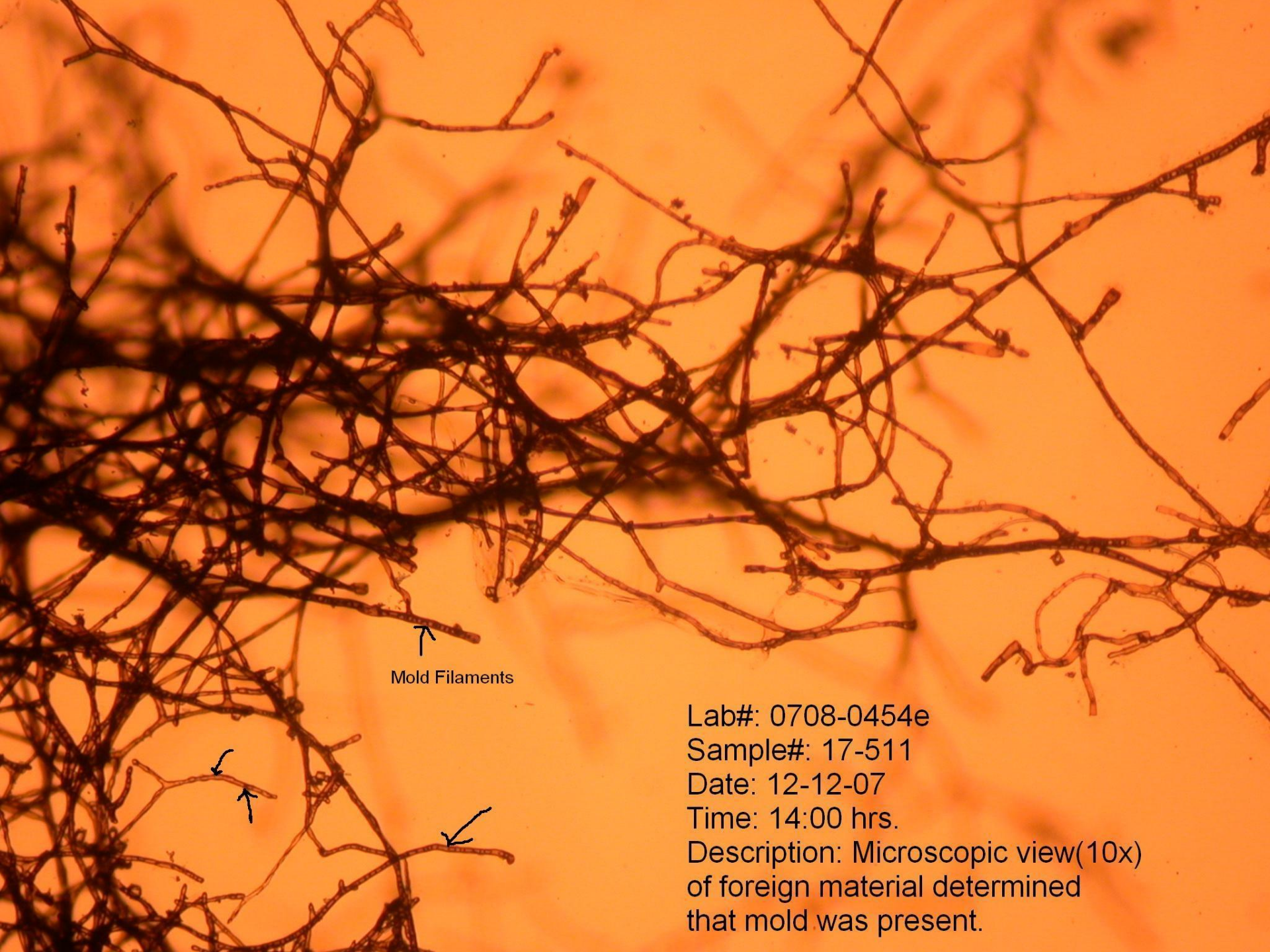
Date: 12-05-07

Time: 14:00 hrs.

Description: Close view of foreign material surrounding one cashew has the appearance of insect larvae or eggs.



Lab#: 0708-0454c  
Sample#: 17-511  
Date: 12-12-07  
Time: 14:00 hrs.  
Description: Foreign material  
collected from liquid sample.



↑  
Mold Filaments

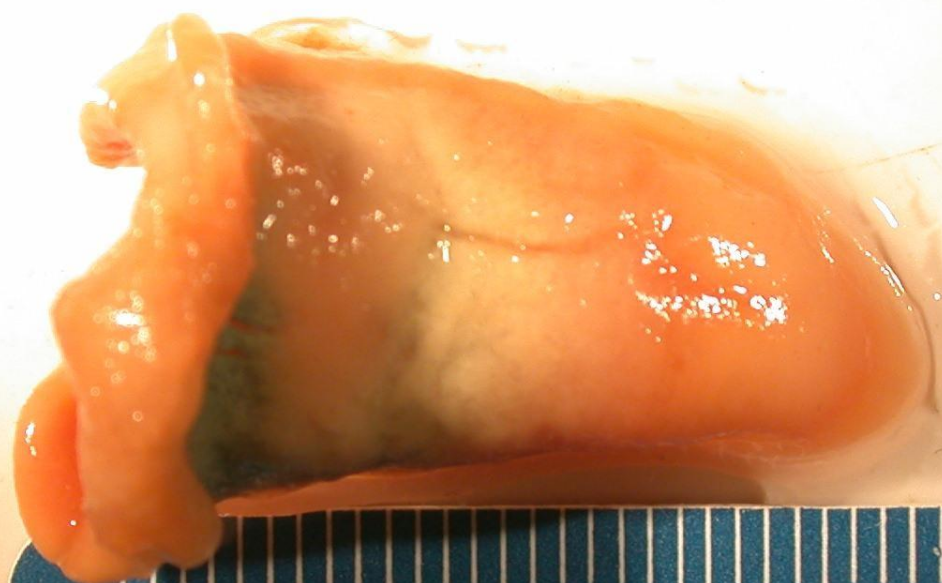
Lab#: 0708-0454e

Sample#: 17-511

Date: 12-12-07

Time: 14:00 hrs.

Description: Microscopic view(10x)  
of foreign material determined  
that mold was present.



CENTIMETERS

Cat. No.

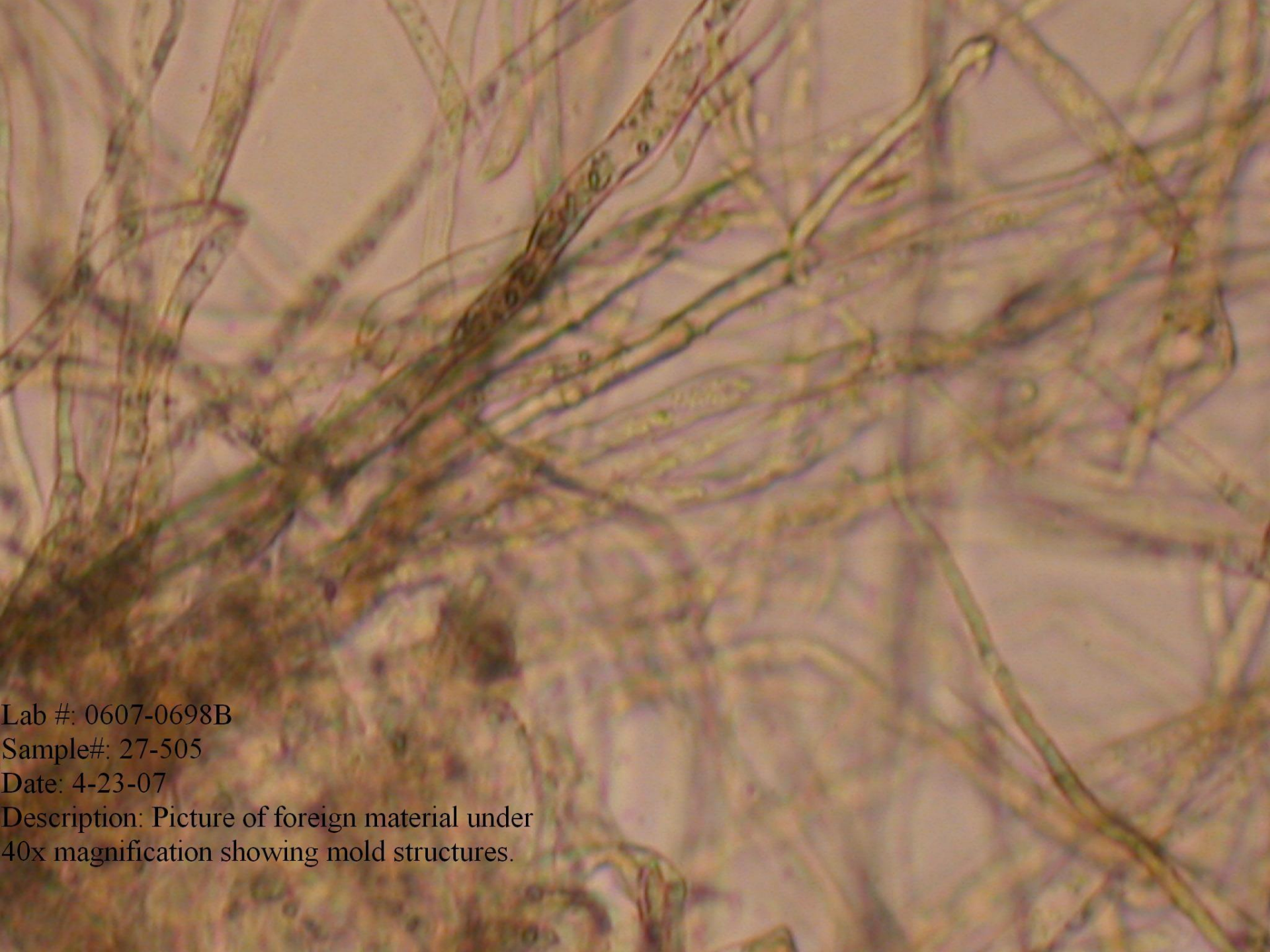
INCHES

Lab #: 0607-0698A

Sample#: 27-505

Date: 4-23-07

Description: Picture of foreign material  
measuring approximately 3cm in length.



Lab #: 0607-0698B

Sample#: 27-505

Date: 4-23-07

Description: Picture of foreign material under  
40x magnification showing mold structures.

# **Illness or Injury**

- **Salmonella, E. coli and Listeria are common complaints related to illnesses**
- **Glass, metal shavings or chemical contamination are common injury related complaints**

# **Food Handler**

- **Working when they are ill**
- **Not wearing gloves and touching food after its been processed (RTE)**
- **Not wearing hair restraints**
- **Picking up food that's been dropped on floor and serving it to customers**
- **Wearing soiled clothes**

# **Sanitation Issue**

- **Soiled floors**
- **Bathroom urinals overflowing**
- **No soap for washing hands in restrooms**
- **Serving food on soiled plates**
- **Finding cockroaches on their table**
- **Seeing mice running in kitchen**
- **Bad odors**

# In Summary

- **When in doubt ask questions**
- **Use new version of complaint form**
- **Thoroughly investigate and collect adequate information to resolve complaint**
- **Take photographs**
- **Need adequate amount of sample to run tests**
- **Attach complaint form with samples**

# Questions

- **Email - [dgala@isdh.in.gov](mailto:dgala@isdh.in.gov)**
- **Phone - 317-233-7366**